Claims:

1. A method of managing a telecommunications network device, including a plurality of distributed processors coupled together through an isolated Ethernet switch control plane, comprising:

   associating each of the distributed processors with an identifier that is unique within the network device; and

   using the identifiers as Media Access Control (MAC) addresses on the Ethernet switch control plane.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the network device further includes cards inserted within slots in a network device chassis, wherein each of the plurality of distributed processors is located on a different one of the cards, and wherein each of the identifiers comprises a slot identification corresponding to the card on which the identifier's associated processor is mounted.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein each of the identifiers further comprises additional information related to the card on which the identifier's associated processor is mounted.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the network device further includes cards, wherein each of the plurality of distributed processors is located on a different one of the cards, and wherein each of the identifiers comprises a serial number assigned to the card on which the identifier's associated processor is mounted.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein each of the identifiers further comprises additional information related to the card on which the identifier's associated processor is mounted.

6. A method of managing a telecommunications network, including a plurality of network devices, wherein each network device includes a plurality of distributed processors coupled together through a control plane, and wherein the control planes

of the plurality of network devices are coupled together and isolated between the plurality of network devices, comprising:

associating each of the distributed processors within each of the network devices with an identifier that is unique across the plurality of network devices; and

using the identifiers as control plane addresses.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the control planes are Ethernet switches and the identifiers are used as Media Access Control (MAC) addresses.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the control planes are Asynchronous Transfer Mode networks.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the control plane are Multi-Protocol Label Switching networks.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein each of the network devices further includes cards, wherein each of the plurality of distributed processors within each of the network devices is located on a different one of the cards, and wherein each of the identifiers comprises a serial number assigned to the card on which the identifier's associated processor is mounted.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein each of the identifiers further comprises additional information related to the card on which the identifier's associated processor is mounted.